

thanks to Ambassador Wood—PRTs, which is Provincial Reconstruction Teams, made up of military and civilian personnel, all aiming to help the Afghans recover from unbelievable brutality of the Taliban and have a society that's capable of meeting the needs of its people. We've also got two members of the PRT here present with us.

Our strategy in Afghanistan is, one, to provide enough security so civil society can move forward. Any counter—effective counter-insurgency strategy will require more than just military action; it requires a military-civilian interface. And so if you look on the screen, you see brave and courageous Americans in uniform and not in uniform, because they're a part of this strategy to help Afghans, one, understand the blessings of good governance. In other words, the folks are attempting to fight corruption at the local level so that the local citizens are able to have a positive outlook about their government. We're also working to educate people, build roads, provide good health care. And our fellow citizens are there on the ground, in some difficult circumstances, all aiming to help this young democracy survive and thrive. And there are difficulties, but we're also making progress.

And the best thing we got going for us—not only do we have brave and compassionate citizens willing to serve, but we've also got an ideology based upon liberty, which stands in stark contrast to the ideology of the thugs and murderers called the Taliban. And the job of hand is to help these folks recover, help the Afghans realize there's a better future for them. And it's hard work, but it's necessary work for the security of our country.

And so it's been a great pleasure for senior members of my administration to hear the stories and to hear the issues that they face. I'm enriched by the experience, and I do want to thank you very much for serving our country. And as I mentioned to you earlier, please thank your families for them standing by you during these—during your time of service.

God bless you all, and thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

## Statement on Farm Legislation

March 13, 2008

The Congress has agreed on legislation to extend current farm programs to April 18, 2008. I will sign this legislation to avoid serious disruptions that might result if the current law is allowed to expire without a responsible farm bill enacted in its place. Farmers and ranchers deserve to know the structure of policies that affect their day-to-day business activities, and right now they face uncertainty.

Throughout this process, my goal has been and remains to sign a good farm bill. Over 1 year ago, following listening sessions across the Nation, the Department of Agriculture unveiled a reform-minded and fiscally responsible approach to supporting America's farmers and ranchers. My proposal would provide agriculture producers with a safety net that better targets benefits and provides funding for emerging priorities. Today's farm economy is very strong, and Congress should not miss this opportunity to reform current farm programs.

My administration has been eager to work with Congress. We have offered legislative language and a list of potential spending offsets to ensure Congress does not increase taxes. And while insisting on significant program reforms, we have demonstrated flexibility on how to achieve real reform. I have also made it clear that any final farm bill that includes a tax increase or does not include reform will be met with a veto. These negotiations have taken place in good faith with the goal of reaching a final agreement that meets the needs of farmers and enjoys the support of America's taxpayers.

This legislation to extend current farm programs will provide more time for Congress to reach an agreement. If a final agreement is not reached by April 18, I call on Congress to extend current law for at least 1 year. While long-term extension of current law is not the desired outcome, I believe the Government has a responsibility to provide America's farmers and ranchers with a timely and predictable farm program, not multiple

short-term extensions of current law. Without a predictable policy, agriculture producers will be unable to make sound business decisions with respect to this year's crop.

I am eager to sign a farm bill that provides a safety net for farmers, includes significant farm program reform similar to the administration's farm bill proposal, and does not include tax increases. I have made clear the framework of an agreement that will garner my signature and urge Congress to pass a bill that meets these criteria.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 2745, which was assigned Public Law 110-196.

### **Statement on the Death of Archbishop Paulos Faraj Rahho of Mosul**

*March 13, 2008*

I send my condolences to the Chaldean community and the people of Iraq on the death of Archbishop Rahho. I deplore the despicable act of violence committed against the Archbishop of Mosul. The terrorists will continue to lose in Iraq because they are savage and cruel. Their utter disregard for human life, demonstrated by this murder and by recent suicide attacks against innocent Iraqis in Baghdad and innocent pilgrims celebrating a religious holiday, is turning the Iraqi people against them. We will continue to work with the Iraqi Government to protect and support civilians, irrespective of religious affiliation.

### **Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocol Amending the Canada-United States Taxation Convention**

*March 13, 2008*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and Canada with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital done at Washington on September 26, 1980, as Amended by the Protocols done on June 14, 1983, March 28, 1984, March 17, 1995, and July 29, 1997, signed on September 21, 2007,

at Chelsea (the "proposed Protocol"). The proposed Protocol would amend the existing income tax Convention between the United States and Canada that was concluded in 1980, as amended by prior protocols (the "existing Treaty"). Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State with respect to the proposed Protocol.

The proposed Protocol would eliminate withholding taxes on cross-border interest payments. In addition, the proposed Protocol would coordinate the tax treatment of contributions to, and other benefits of, pension funds for cross-border workers. The proposed Protocol also includes provisions related to the taxation of permanent establishments, so-called dual-resident corporations, income derived through certain entities that are considered fiscally transparent, and former U.S. citizens and long-term residents. The proposed Protocol further strengthens the existing Treaty's provisions that prevent the Treaty's inappropriate use by third-country residents. The proposed Protocol also provides for mandatory resolution of certain cases before the competent authorities.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the proposed Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
March 13, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 14.

### **Remarks to the Economic Club of New York and a Question-and-Answer Session in New York City**

*March 14, 2008*

**The President.** Glenn, thanks for the kind introduction. Thanks for giving me a chance to speak to the Economic Club of New York. It seems like I showed up in a interesting moment—[laughter]—during an interesting time. I appreciate the fact that you've assembled to give me a chance to just share some ideas with you. I also appreciate the fact that